

From: [Joseph Hubbard](#)  
To: [Ragan Broyles](#); [Eric Delgado](#)  
Subject: Article: 'Very, very big concern': Wildfire nears Los Alamos lab - MSNBC, 6/27/11  
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## **'Very, very big concern': Wildfire nears Los Alamos lab**

MSNBC, 06/27/11

A wind-driven wildfire has forced the closure of the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the evacuations of about 100 people in northern New Mexico, officials said early Monday. U.S. Forest Service officials said that the fire had burned at least six square miles and was threatening buildings, power lines and natural gas lines. They said it was about one mile southwest of the government laboratory. Lab officials has closed the facility and say all radioactive and hazardous materials were being protected. The site was founded during the Second World War to develop the world's first nuclear weapons. Los Alamos County authorities have issued voluntary evacuation orders for the towns of Los Alamos and White Rock. Residents from the rural towns of Cochiti Mesa and Las Conchas were evacuated after the fire started Sunday.

Smoke from the fire could be seen in Santa Fe, more than 30 miles to the southeast.

"We have homes and we have the labs, so it's a very, very big concern, not only locally but nationally and globally," said Lawrence Lujan, a spokesman for the Santa Fe National Forest. "This fire is very complex. We have a national type one team coming in because of the nature of the fire."

New Mexico Governor Susanna Martinez toured the lab's emergency operations center late Sunday.

Martinez has ordered the New Mexico National Guard to Los Alamos to provide support for the ongoing efforts to protect lives, property and critical infrastructure threatened by the fire.

"My administration will make every effort to provide support for local emergency response crews," she said.

### **'Key facilities'**

The blaze continued to throw flames a half mile ahead of the fire pushed by high winds and hot dry conditions.

Bandelier National Monument has been evacuated, as have the communities of Cochiti Mesa and Las Conchas. Voluntary evacuations have been issued for Los Alamos and nearby community White Rock.

Jeff Berger, a spokesman for the [Los Alamos National Laboratory](#), said the fire was rapidly advancing but had not yet reached lab property.

"Lab emergency crews have been dispatched across the lab ... to protect key facilities and materials," Berger said. "Protected areas include all hazardous and radioactive facilities and our proton accelerator and supercomputing centers."

Berger said the laboratory would be closed Monday for all activities and non-essential employees.

Fire crews are currently battling 41 large wildfires in the United States, which have



torched more than 1.4 million acres, according to the Idaho-based National Fire Information Center.

Most of the active blazes are in the Southwest and Texas, where scant rainfall has created tinder-dry conditions.

Reuters and The Associated Press contributed to this report. More at:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43544283/ns/weather/>

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